



## STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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# SUPERINTENDENT LUNA TAKES STEPS TOWARD GROWTH MODEL

BOISE – Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Luna announced today that Idaho will begin using academic growth to hold public schools accountable for student achievement.

Superintendent Luna sent U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan a letter this week, informing him that Idaho will start moving toward a new accountability system based on student academic growth since Congress and the Administration have failed to update and reauthorize the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

“The reauthorization of No Child Left Behind is overdue by more than four years. There can only be two reasons for this inaction: either Congress doesn’t have the political will, or it simply isn’t a priority of the Administration. Neither reason is acceptable, nor is it the fault of individual states,” Superintendent Luna wrote in the letter. “This inability of Congress and the Administration has left states in a parallel universe, where we are being forced to try and reconcile an inefficient, outdated law with bold, innovative paths toward raising student achievement. We can no longer financially afford to do both. Since Congress and the Administration are not going to act immediately, states will take the lead.”

Under No Child Left Behind, states are required to hold schools accountable for academic achievement by measuring proficiency, or how many students in a school and each student subgroup within a school, passed the statewide standardized test. The current model of accountability is completely based on proficiency because that is what was available in 2001 when No Child Left Behind became law.

Today, however, Idaho has the ability to measure academic growth, not necessarily how many students passed the test but how much growth did they show in a school year. A growth model is more accurate and can better identify which schools are successful and which are truly in need of improvement. The *Students Come First* education reform laws use this growth model, moving Idaho beyond the outdated No Child Left Behind proficiency model.

The State of Idaho is one of 41 states that recently signed on to the Council of Chief State School Officers’ *Roadmap on Next-Generation State Accountability Systems*, which includes moving toward a growth model of accountability. As part of these efforts, in 2011, the State of Idaho will not lift its proficiency targets for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Idaho’s current proficiency targets are 85.6% in reading and 83% in mathematics, some of the highest targets in the nation. The proficiency target is the percentage of students in an entire school and students in a subgroup that must pass the ISAT in order for the school to meet AYP under No Child Left Behind.

States had hoped the reauthorization of No Child Left Behind would allow for a growth model by now, but the reauthorization is now four years overdue. Therefore, Idaho will keep its current proficiency targets in place and begin implementing a new model of accountability so we can direct the state’s limited resources to those schools that are truly struggling academically.

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